

## Six Months of Activities From URI West India



CC Beyond Sarhad organized a “Save Democracy and Woman March for Change” rally on 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2019. This rally was also meant for awareness before the Parliamentary elections for people to exercise their voting rights and to register themselves for Voter IDs. The rally was led by members of URI Cooperation Circles (CCs). Also, a message of communal harmony was promoted by sharing the democratic values and principles of the Constitutions of India.



CC Janseva Prathishthan and the URI Regional Coordinator organized a meeting of the community leaders and CC members to highlight URI’s work and also to engage the CC members in quasi-judicial work to promote women’s empowerment and justice for all. The Janseva Prathishthan CC members spoke about principles of URI and how to remove any form of discrimination in the name of caste, class, religion or ethnicity. The program was organized on the premises of the Collector Office. The Deputy Collector and Secretary to Women Welfare Ministry graced the occasion. Magazines from the Ministry of Social Welfare were released and distributed to the community workers. The youth who supported URI’s cause were lauded for their role and winning competitions.



URI West India is collaborating with YAKA (YES AKADEMY), which is an organization in France mainly working with youth. The URI Regional Coordinator was invited for the Youth Forum and to deliver a lecture on the Composite Culture in India and in Indian history. There were 35 youth who came from France and were here for two months, working in community development projects in rural areas in Maharashtra, including organic farming and environmental protection. Their visit ended with the International Youth Forum at Sanskardham College in Mumbai. This program was held last year in August, but this year we also worked on our partnership - and hopefully from 2020 onward, URI will be there as one of the partners.





The CC Samaanta and CC Karni, based in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, convened a meeting of community leaders, religious leaders and social activists to address the issue of “Save the Girl Child” and also how to make interfaith efforts to address similar issues. This meeting was held on 28th March, 2019. At length, village heads discussed how to work to promote human rights of citizens, and to stop discrimination against the lower castes, women and other religious groups. They shared real stories of communal harmony. Since Jaisalmer district is situated very close to the Indo-Pak Border, this is sensitive, but people from both Hindu and Muslim communities live in harmony and share common culture. However there are some political groups who have started creating radical views and disturbing the harmonious relations.



On the occasion of International Women’s Day, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2019, the URI Regional Coordinator of URI West India, Mrs. Qutub Kidwai, was conferred with the ‘Exceptional Woman’ award for her books, articles and her work on women’s empowerment, as well as helping women and children in their legal cases. The award was given by the Mahila Samupdeshan, Home Department, and Government of Maharashtra.



URI West India, in partnership with Asia Humanity Foundation and Misaal Foundation, ran a campaign called “Let’s Go to School” in the 25 villages of Alwar District Rajasthan. The campaign was held in the month of June, 2019. The campaign began from one of the government schools. The objective of the campaign is to admit as many students who are dropouts as possible, and to stop child labor.



CC Kalrav Cultural Manch co-organized a meeting with human rights activists in the city of Ahmedabad, Gujarat on 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2019. This meeting was held in one of the iconic heritage places which is popularly known as Interfaith Temple. The speakers were concerned about growing intolerance. The cases of mob lynching, attacks on churches, atrocities committed on Dalits (lower-caste people), and an increased number of youth becoming cow vigilantes and

using violence against other communities. The interfaith leaders urged the government to stop these acts of violence in the name of religion.



A meeting of women community leaders was held in Mumbai on 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2019. CC Leaders from Gujarat came to Mumbai to train women on how to do bridge-building between different religious and ethnic communities. The women who attended this meeting mainly reside in slums and ghettos.





URI West India has been selected on the City-Level Committee for Police Reform since January, 2019. The Police Reform Committee is a network of 28 experts on various issues like child trafficking, women's family law issues, crimes against women and children, crimes against senior citizens, communal problems, etc. There are lawyers, professors and activists who provide recommendations and suggestions to the Police and Home Department. This committee also works closely with zonal-level commissioners and IPS officers. The objective of the committee is access to justice for the marginalised groups. We help in implementing the Supreme Court's guidelines on better policing. This meeting was held on 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2019 in Mumbai.





URI West India and Asia Humanity Foundation, Rajasthan, jointly organized a one-day State Level Workshop for the Youth. This workshop was held on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2019. There were 42 Youth from Rajasthan and Haryana. The workshop was for youth activists, young journalists, university post-graduate students, young religious leaders, etc. The topics discussed were: Constitution of India and people's rights, transforming conflicts, composite culture in Rajasthan - a historical perspective, gender sensitization, and how to collaborate with government authorities to address local needs and issues.



URI CCs Ekta Sangathan and CC Safar in Gujarat planned a community rally on Environment Day, on 6<sup>th</sup> June, 2019. The community members, along with CC members, went door to door and distributed saplings. Some 500 tree saplings were distributed and this will continue every

two months. The CC members also applied at the Municipal Corporation office for free saplings. URI West India is also planning to supply seed balls to the participants of URI events.



The CC members from CC St. Xaviers Social Service Society, Gujarat, organized a community meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2019, inviting the Station Head Officer from the local police station to have dialogue with the community members to promote interfaith harmony and also on better policing. The police assured all forms of help to promote safety and security. The officers highly appreciated the efforts of the URI CC members to organize such outreach for the police.